

Wonderful

DULUTH

1973

PICTORIAL

CALENDAR

DATE

BOOK

Featuring scenes from 1972's three major summer storms which created millions of dollars damage in the short span of thirty days.

Front Cover picture: A washout on Skyline Drive about Tenth Avenue West.

Back Cover picture: Sixth Avenue East received the brunt of the damage in all three storms.

Cover photos by Richard Ridgewell

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Forward

While it has been the policy of the publishers of this annual date book to present positive, interesting things about our city each year, we did not feel that we could ignore the three catastrophic storms of 1972. Here, therefore, please find a photo essay of the effects of the three torrential rains. Photography by Earl Johnson, George Starkey, Charles Curtis and Karl Jaro.

THE STORMS

Wednesday, August 16th—Tornado! The call came in about 3:05 p.m. . . . a tornado had been sighted in the Grand Lake area. Another at 3:59 and 4:40 and 4:46, working its way over Little Grand to the intersection of the Midway and Morris Thomas roads. In Duluth the skies were black and the rain obscured vision beyond 10 to 15 feet. Winds and hail, gusting up to 75 MPH hit the area. Chisholm, Hibbing, Cotton, Lake Superior at 60th Ave. East reported tornado tunnels.

Civil Defense sirens sounded at 7:15 P.M. and homeowners took shelter in their basements. Funnel clouds were reported near the Airport, three miles south of Maple and 10 miles north of Cloquet. Finally the "all-clear" sounded at 9:06. Working through the night, public spirited citizens, along with city and county employees, did their best to divert the torrents of water cascading down the hillsides.

Daylight showed the heaviest damage to be concentrated in the Central Hillside where countless basements and first floors were flooded, streets and sidewalks washed out and huge piles of debris came to rest at the bottom of the hills. Fortunately there were no fatalities and few serious, personal injuries. Rainfall, at midnight Thursday, measured 3.8 inches, bringing the yearly total to date 6.47 inches above normal.

SUNDAY, AUGUST 20TH— Coming on the heels of Wednesday's torrent, a severe early morning thunderstorm struck Duluth, creating havoc throughout the entire city. Previous major washouts and flooding vastly increased the damage done by this second blow, which dumped 2.95 inches of water, the most ever received in any one 24 hour period since 1939, on the city. Most of the rain came within two hours, about 4 to 6 a.m.

Damage was hard to appraise, but Mayor Boo estimated it to be "in the millions of dollars." The Mayor

Continued on Page 5

immediately called an emergency Council meeting to request a "disaster status." Both the Council and the St. Louis County Board passed such resolutions and they were hurried to the proper state and federal officials. President Nixon promptly declared the area a federal disaster area and plans were set up for a disaster relief office at the Arena.

Sixth Avenue East again took the principal brunt of the flood, pouring water and debris onto all the streets that cross it. Power was off and on most of the day in the downtown area due to flooding of Minnesota Power & Light's Commerce Street and Second Avenue East substation locations. Water stood 10 inches deep in the Municipal Hangar at the Airport and averaged 3 to 4 feet on the light plane storage ramp.

In the West End, thousands of tons of sand being used for the Piedmont Avenue freeway connector washed down 20th Avenue West onto Superior Street closing the street to traffic. Ballast on the Burlington Northern tracks at Third Avenue East was washed out and the main line of the DM & IR was closed due to huge gaps in the area surrounding the ties and rails.

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 20th—Just a month after the first deluge, Duluth was hit again. It started about five in the morning with lightning, thunder and a dense fog. By 10 a.m., two and a half inches of rain had pelted the city and by 4 p.m. a total of 3.77 inches had fallen. A Two Harbors woman and her son were drowned when their car plunged into a washout on

a rural road. A 12-year-old boy was swept into an underground culvert in Duluth Heights and carried at least 2 blocks before fighting his way out an exit.

The brunt of the storm hit in Duluth and along the North Shore to Two Harbors. Downtown Duluth was again filled with rubble and debris—plus much of the fill and gravel that had been used to repair the previous months storms. The railroad yards below Michigan Street again were flooded with over 2 feet of water. Sixth Avenue East, for the third time, was the scene of rushing water and washouts.

Many people who had suffered the loss or damage of appliances and furnaces in the earlier flood had their basements fill up again and much of their work undone. In Proctor about 3½ blocks of the main business district were submerged to a depth of 5 feet and flooded businesses closed at noon.

Storm loss was estimated at \$22.5 million in Duluth and St. Louis County—nearly \$4 million more than the damage caused by the first two storms. Again State and Federal agencies were called on for assistance and additional disaster funds were made available.

Indicative of the year's weather, what with the winter's heavy snow load and the cool, wet summer, Duluth had 35.14 inches of precipitation through September 20, as compared to the normal precipitation of 28.97 inches for the whole year. Weatherwise, 1972 was a year most Duluthians who enjoy the out-of-doors would just as soon forget.



Freeway sand-fill at 20th Ave. W. and Superior St.



3rd Ave. E. Between Superior and 1st Streets



6th Ave. E. and 6th Street



20th Ave. W. and Superior Street

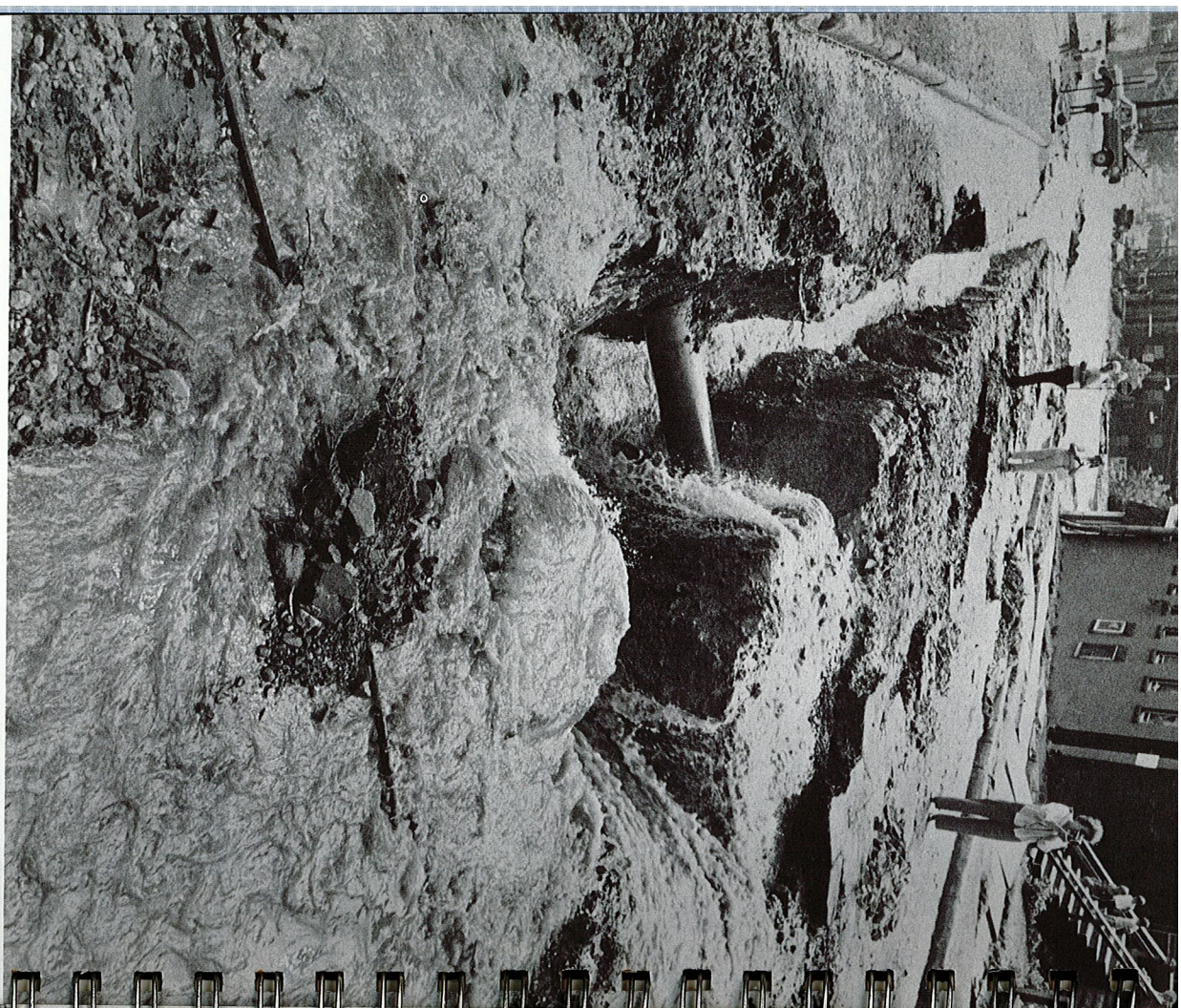


Piedmont Ave. and Third Street



Cleaning an apartment on E. 5th Street

First Ave. W. above 4th Street



6th Ave. E. and 6th Street



2nd St. at 1st Ave. West



Piedmont Ave. and new freeway



12th Avenue West



VFW Clubrooms in West End



Michigan St. at 11th Ave. W.



Height of flood at 26th Ave. W. and 2nd St.



The Hank Jensen family clean on Enger green



6th Ave. East at 6th Street



Skyline Parkway at 9th Ave. West



Stalled cars on Park Point



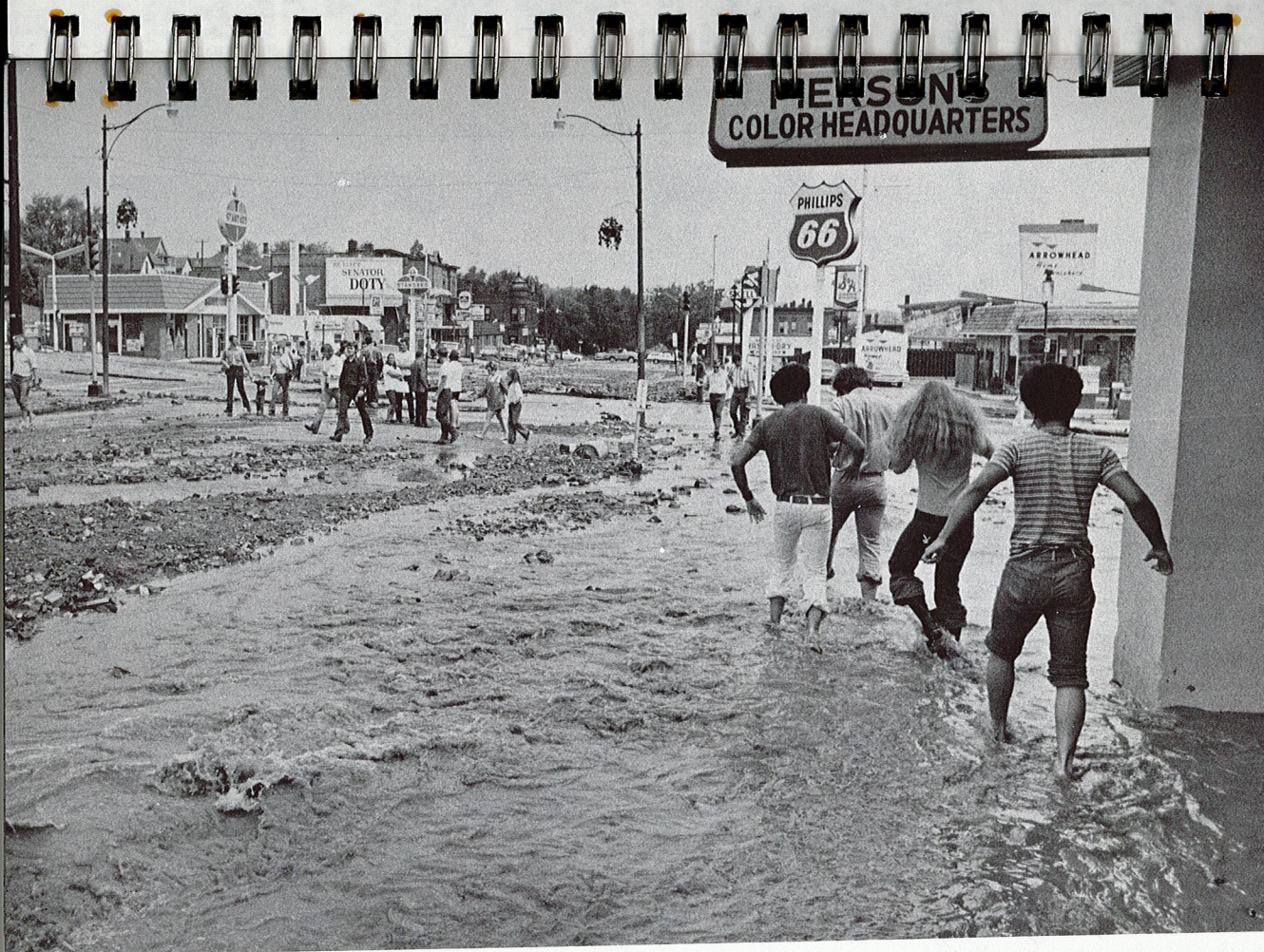
Sand mountains on 20th Ave. West



6th Avenue East above 5th Street



Walking the dog on 6th Avenue East



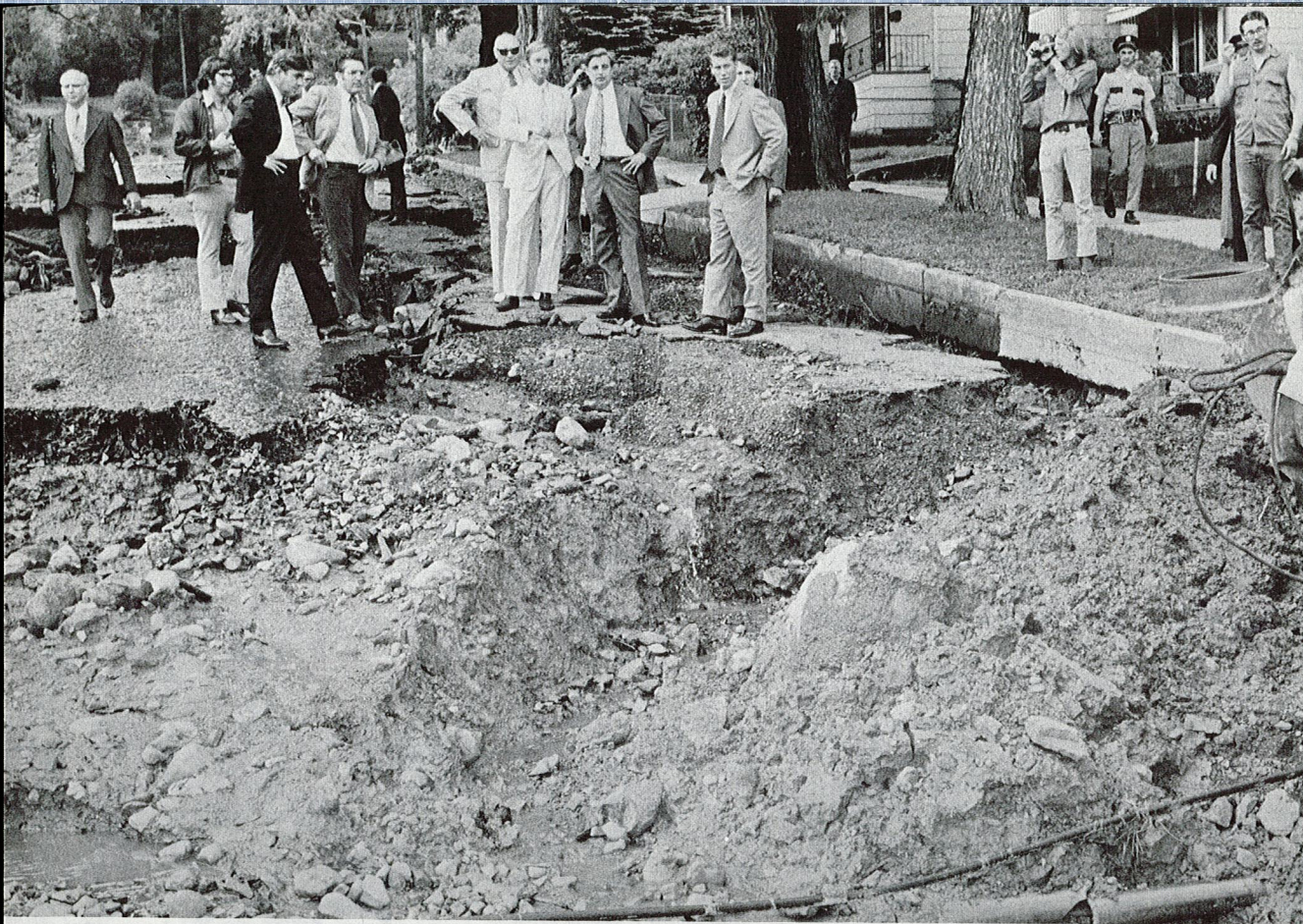
4th Street at 6th Avenue East



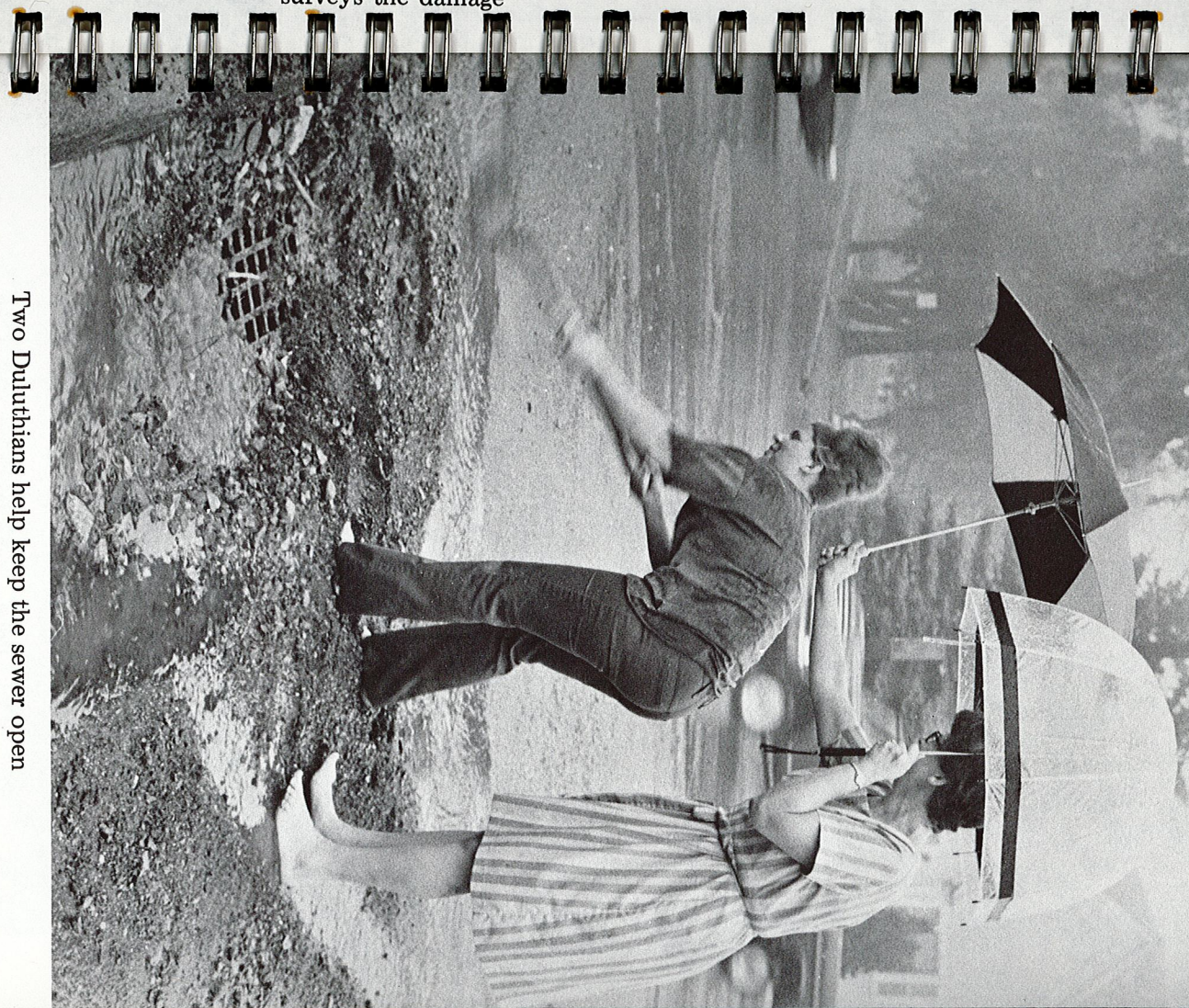
Lincoln Park bridge at 1st Street



A side yard on 5th Street



Mayor Boo, with Sen. Mondale and Gov. Anderson, surveys the damage



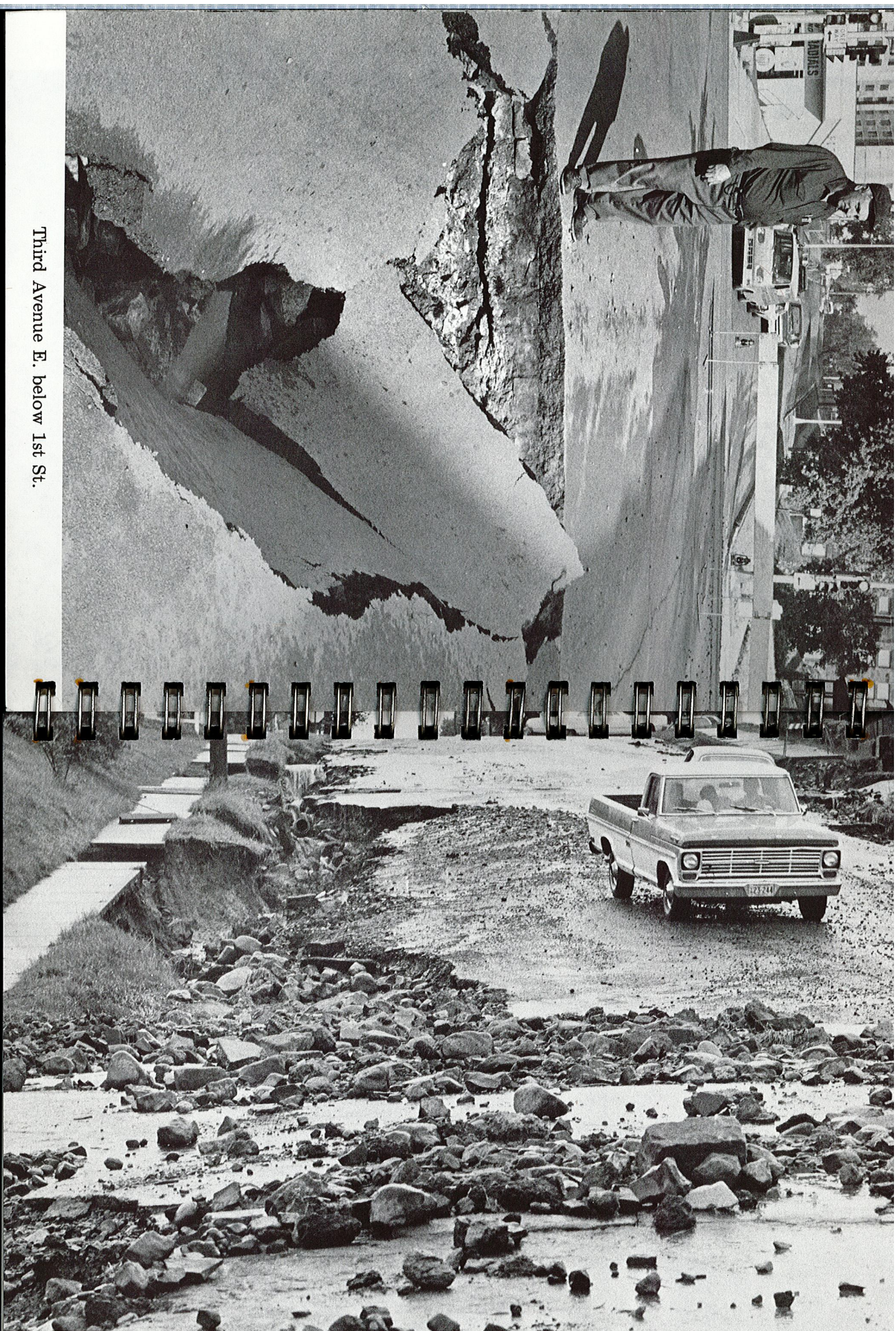
Two Duluthians help keep the sewer open

Sewer forms a geyser from Cascade Park



Salvaging stock at Northern Drug on Commerce St.

Third Avenue E. below 1st St.



First Avenue E. above 6th St.



Columbus Avenue just off Arrowhead Road



First Ave. E. feels the second storm's effects



A lucky youth escaped drowning when he came through this culvert



Duluthians helping at 8th Ave. E. and 9th St.



Sidewalks give way on 1st Ave. E.



A new water hazard at Enger Park Golf Course



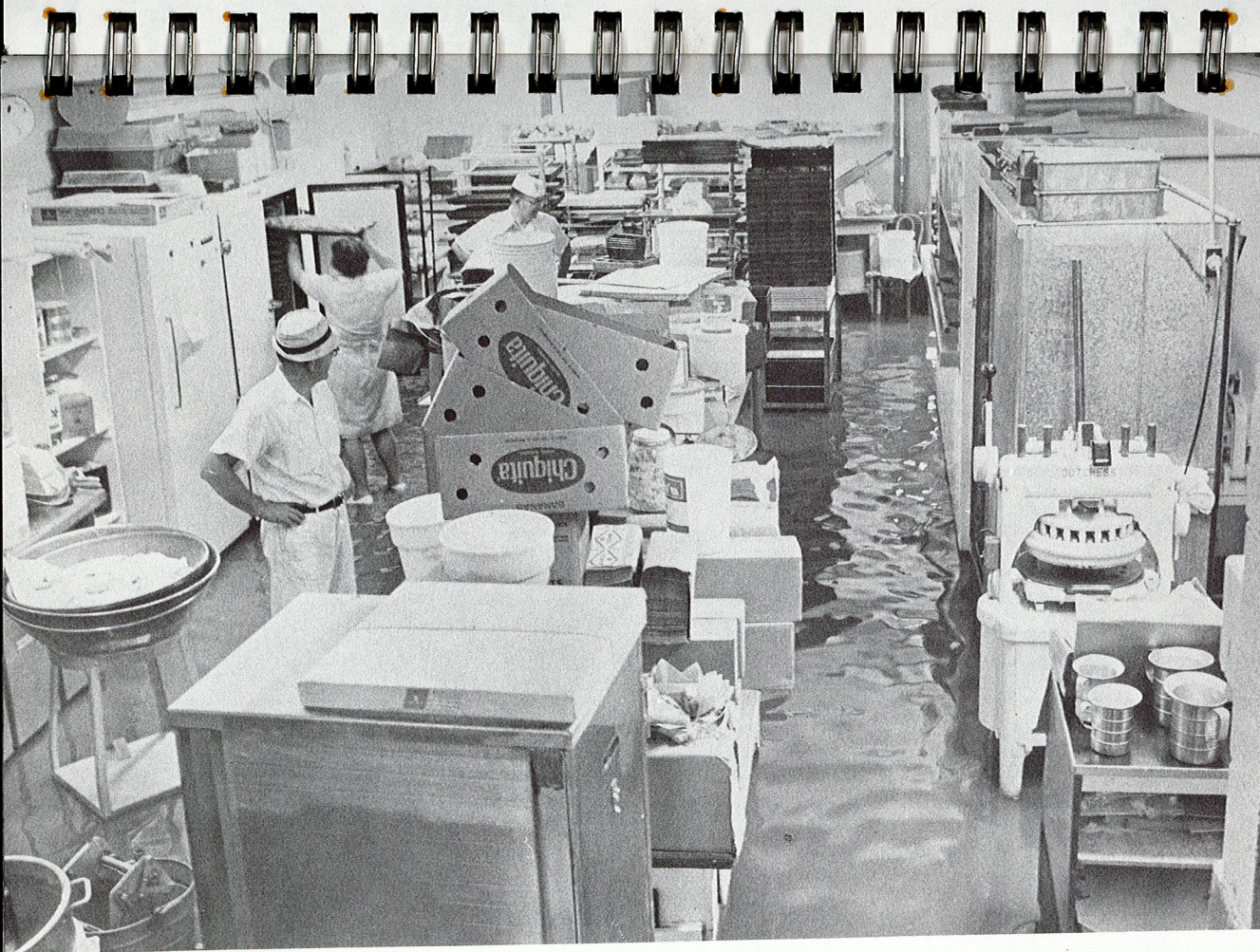
A public-spirited Duluthian works near Kenwood Ave.



A wet crossing on 8th Ave. East



Debris strewn in a backyard on 7th St.



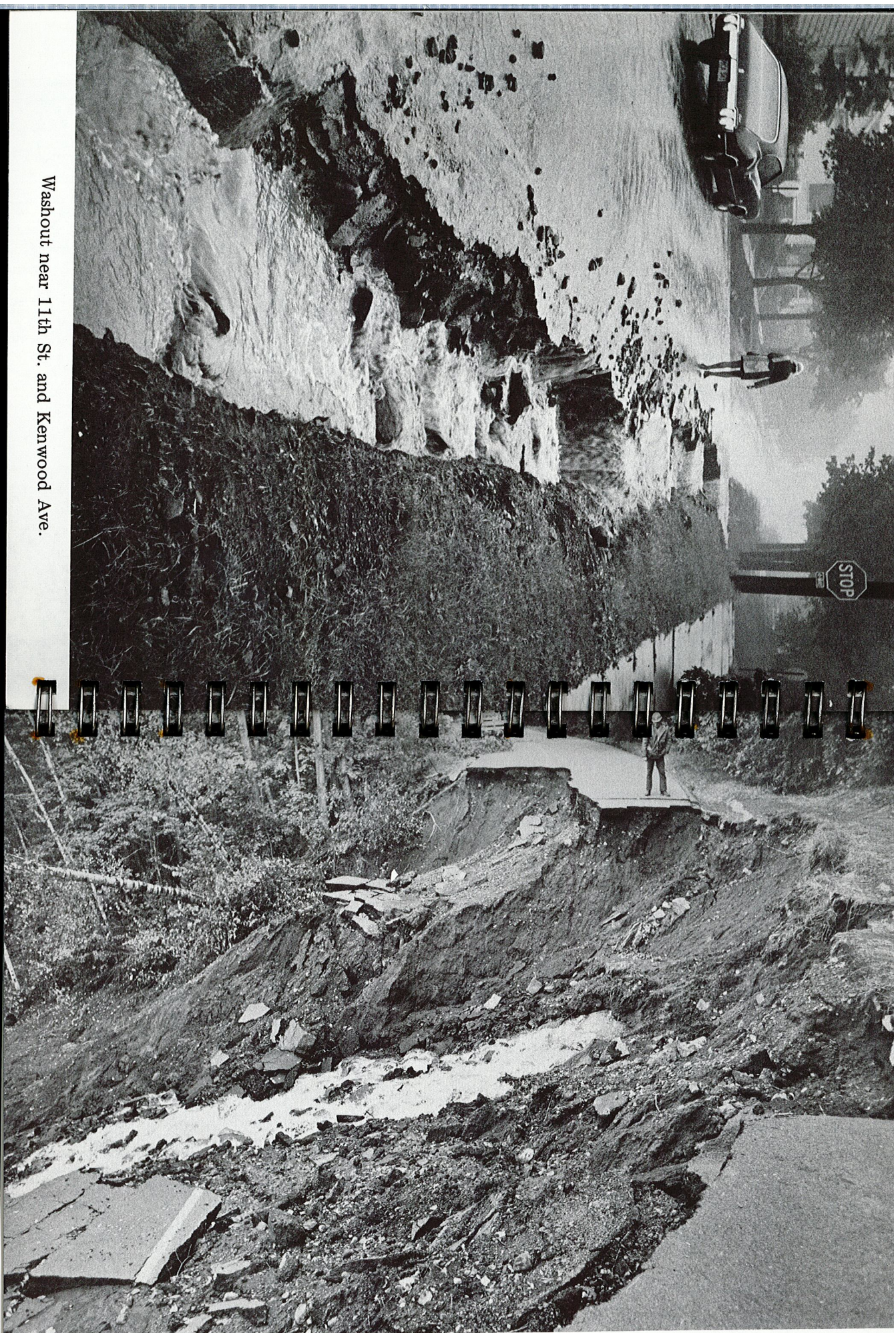
A Proctor bakery after the storm



Proctor's main intersection under water

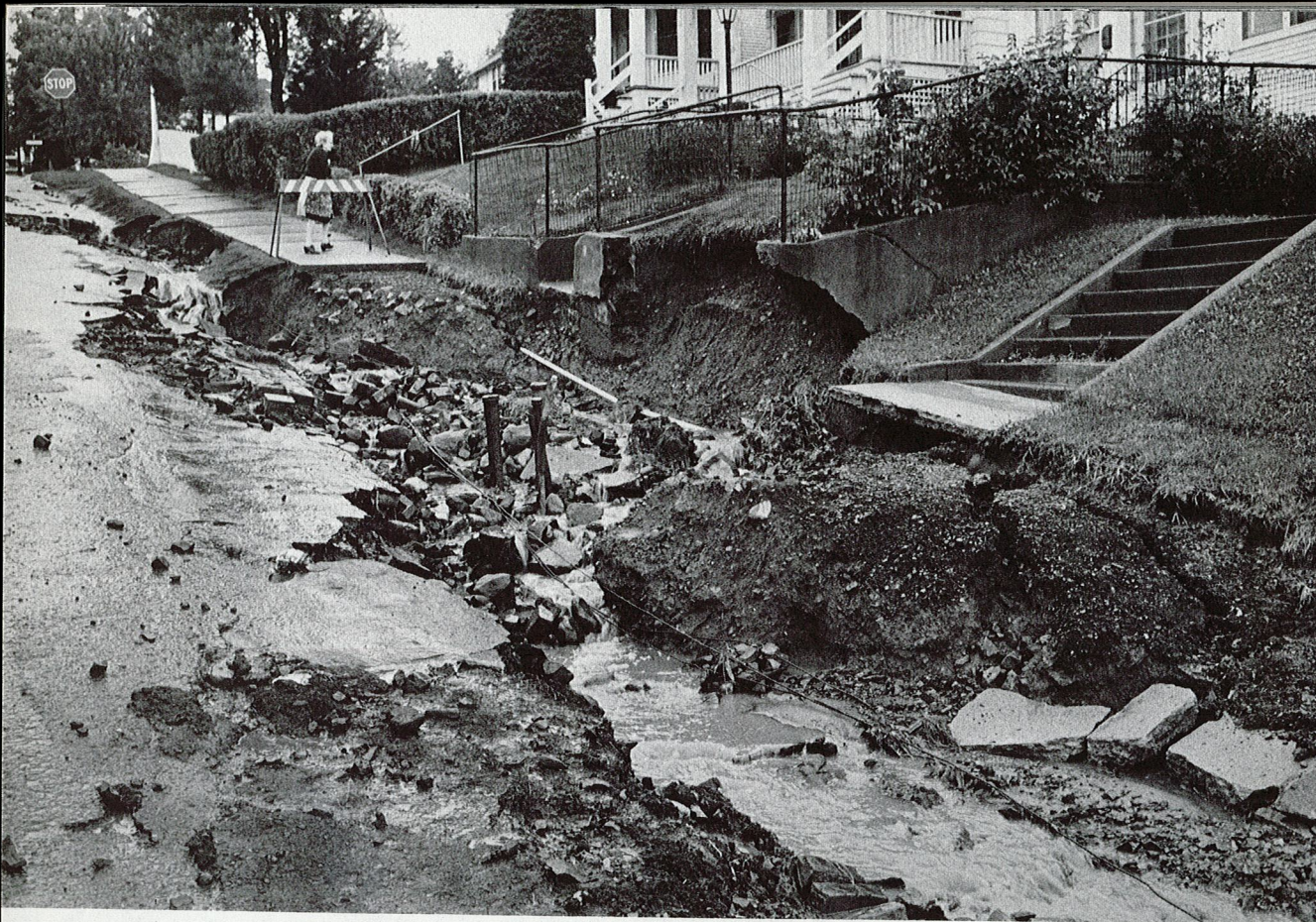


Minnesota Avenue at 13th St. on the Point



Washout near 11th St. and Kenwood Ave.

Skyline Parkway near Chester Bowl

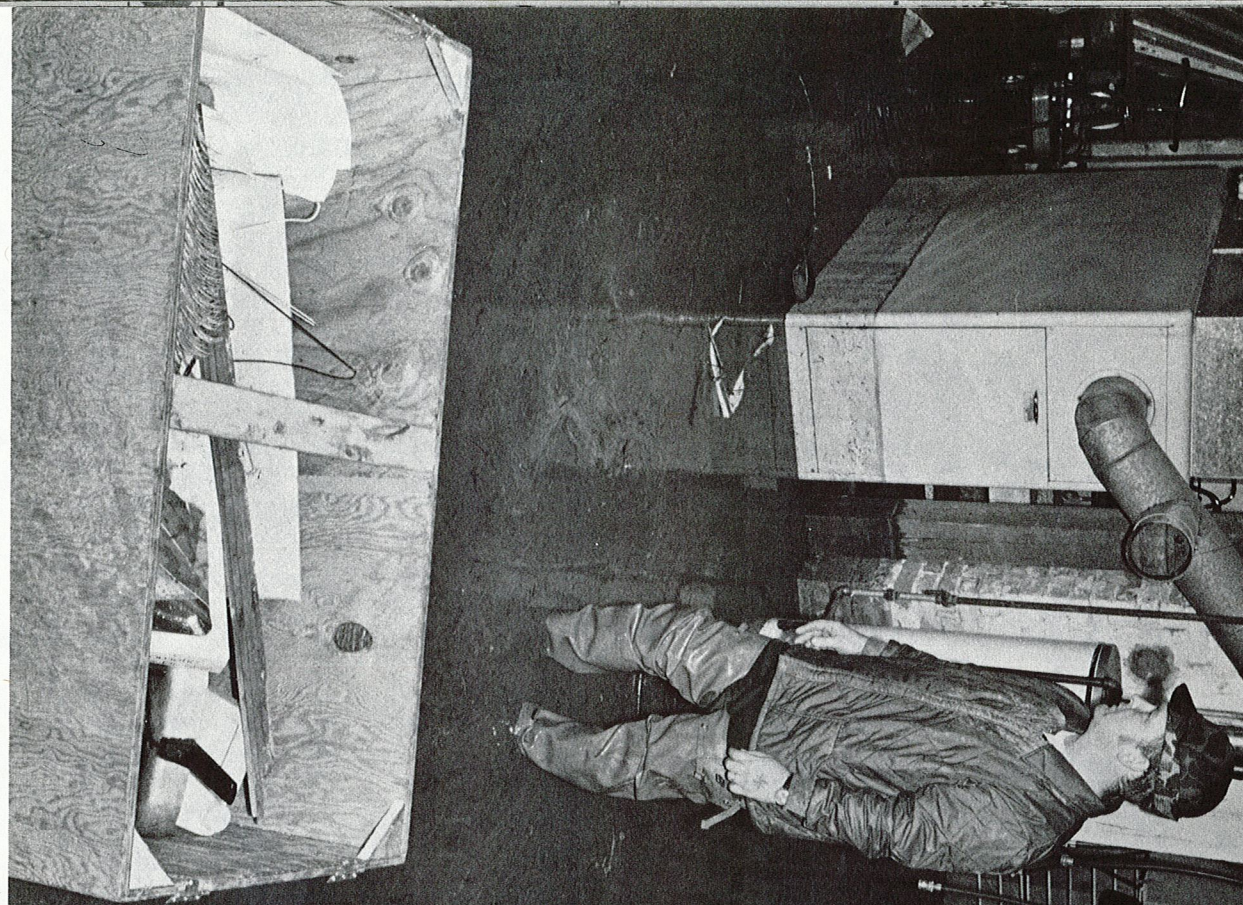


First Avenue East between 6th and 7th Streets



Tipover at Highway 61 and the Ryan Road

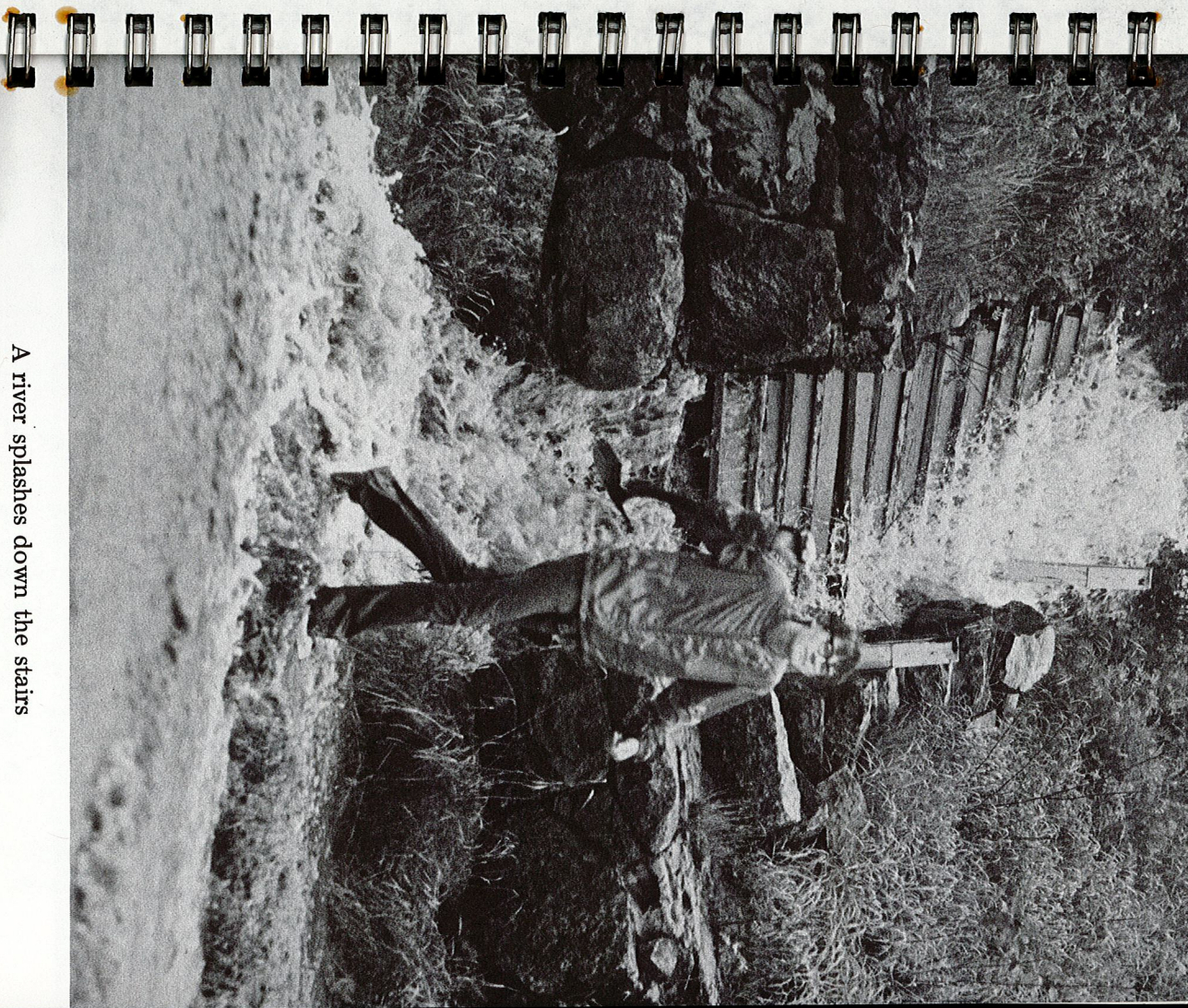
A homeowner surveys his flooded basement



A rushing torrent spills rubble on the street



A yard completely washed away



A river splashes down the stairs

A torrent at Waverly and Elizabeth Streets



Garage collapsed on car and camper on North 6th Ave. E.



1973 **DULUTH, MINNESOTA**